

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L.)
SUBJECT: ATHERTON'S ARRIVAL STATEMENT, FEB. 20, 1978

DEPT. FOR NEA; USIA FOR INA, JERUSALEM FOR ATHERTON PARTY

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARRIVAL STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE ATHERTON AT LOD AIRPORT, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AT 1845:

WELL IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO RETURN TO ISRAEL WHERE MRS. ATHERTON AND I HAVE SO MANY OLD FRIENDS OF SUCH LONG STANDING. I INTERRUPTED MY MISSION HERE JUST A LITTLE OVER TWO WEEKS AGO TO GO BACK FOR THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT SADAT. WE ARE NOW LOOKING FORWARD TO THE VERY IMPORTANT VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE ASKED ME TO RETURN AT THIS TIME TO CONTINUE THE EFFORTS THAT I WAS ENGAGED IN IN SEEKING TO HELP THE PARTIES ADVANCE THE PEACE PROCESS. I THINK MY RETURN AT THIS TIME UNDERLIES THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO CONTINUITY IN THE PEACE PROCESS. CONTINUITY WHICH I AM SURE THE PARTIES THEMSELVES ALSO SUPPORT. I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN AND HIS COLLEAGUES TOMORROW TO GET UNCLASSIFIED

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DOWN TO BUSINESS. THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE TO CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THE DIFFERENCES ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPALS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT WITH THE VIEWS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN MIND. AFTER OUR TALKS HERE I WILL THEN GO ON TO CAIRO AND CONTINUE THIS EFFORT.

Q: (INAUDIBLE)

ATHERTON: WELL, I THINK THE TALKS WE HAD WITH PRESIDENT SADAT HAVE GIVEN US A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION AND I WILL SIMPLY PICK UP WHERE I LEFT OFF AND CONTINUE THE PROCESS. IF THERE ARE STILL DIFFICULTIES AS I'VE SAID BEFORE BUT WE HAD MADE SOME PROGRESS AND I THINK WE SIMPLY HAVE TO KEEP ON WORKING TO MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS.

Q: HOW FAR ARE WE FROM THE DECLARATION IN PRINCIPAL?

ATHERTON: I REALLY WOULD'NT LIKE TO TRY AND PUT A TIME PERIOD ON IT. WE WILL CONTINUE THE WORK (INAUDIBLE INTERRUPTION)... I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER BEFORE I EVEN START MY TALKS HERE NOT TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF WHERE WE STAND.

Q: WHAT ARE CHANCES TO GET KING HUSSAIN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EFFORTS?

ATHERTON: WELL, AS YOU KNOW ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF COURSE IS TO TRY AND BROADEN THE NEGOTIATIONS. I WOULDNT WANT TO PREJUDGE THAT AT THIS STAGE BUT CERTAINLY ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES IS TO PROVIED A BASIS IN THE DECLARATION FOR BORADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS SO OTHER PARTIES INCLUDING JORDAN COULD JOIN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

LEWIS

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